TOWER OF SHADOWS

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TOWER OF SHADOWS™

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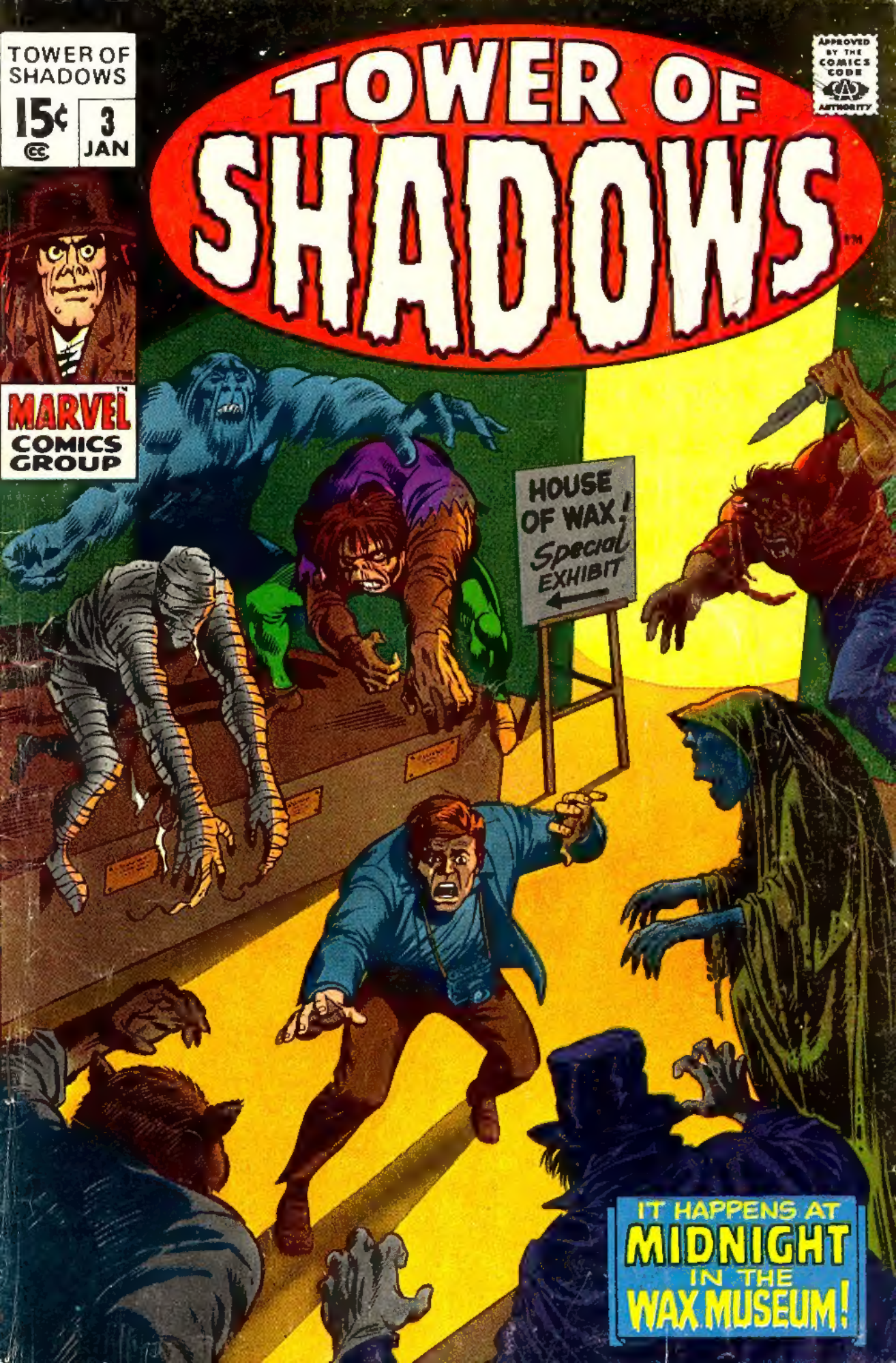

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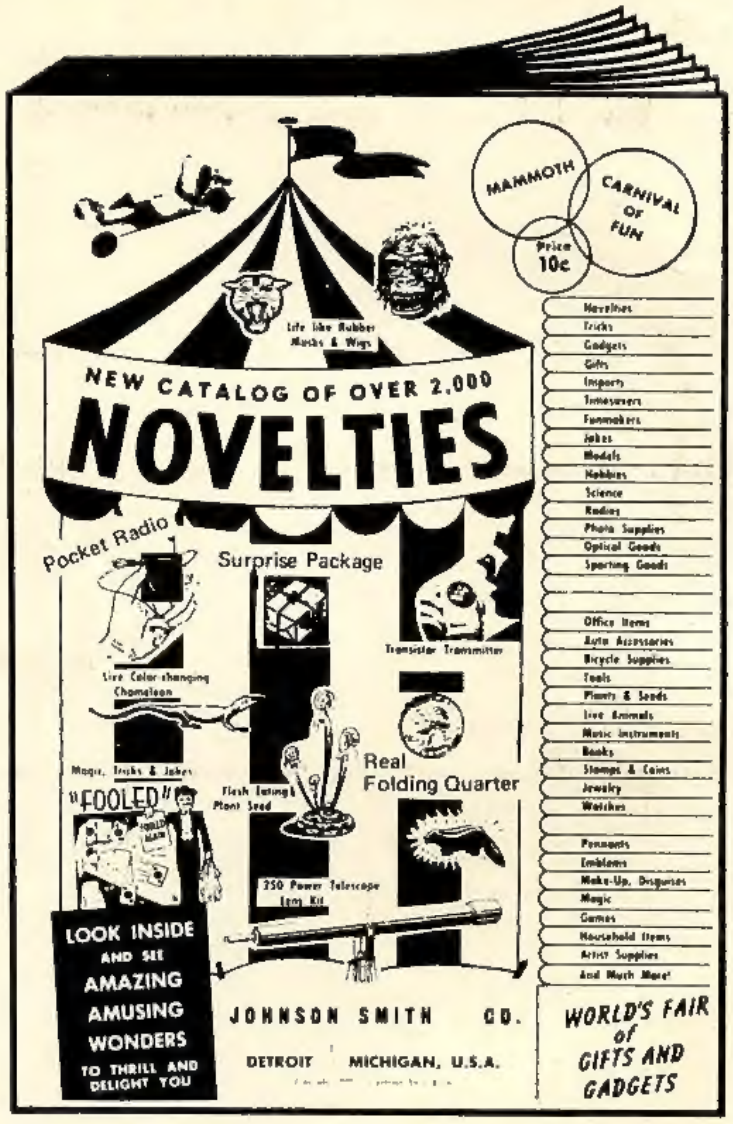
& Many Others



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WHERE YA GOIN' NOW, BIG MAN?... THE TRACK, OR THE TAVERN?
G'WAN, ETHEL, STOW IT! I'M GOIN' OUT FOR A WALK IN THE FRESH AIR!
YOU'RE TOO BUSY USIN' UP ALL THE AIR IN HERE!
DON'T WAIT UP... I'LL TRY TO BE LATE!

200 MILLION AVAILABLE MEN IN THE WORLD, AND I HADDA GO AND MARRY THE POOR MAN'S PETER PAN!
SLAM!

I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER I'M GONNA BE ABLE TO STAND THAT WOMAN!
I'M A BUM, AM I? NO EDJICATION, HUH? SHE'LL SEE... SOME DAY I'M GONNA STRIKE IT BIG, AND SHE'LL BE LAUGHING OUTTA THE OTHER SIDE OF HER MOUTH!
YEAH... SOME DAY!

HARRY WANDERS THE BUSTLING STREETS AIMLESSLY, LOST IN SINGULAR THOUGHT...
AW, WHO AM I KIDDIN'? MAYBE SHE'S RIGHT... MAYBE THERE IS SOMETHIN' WRONG WIT' ME?
O.K., SO I AIN'T GOT NO EDJICATION!
IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO TURN OVER A NEW LEAF!
STEAKS
$1.89
PEP
DAN'S CLAM HOUSE
HOTEL
RESTAURANT

AND, WHADDAYA KNOW... THIS MIGHT BE JUST THE TIME TO START!
IF A BOOK STORE CAN'T HELP BROADEN MY EDJICATION, NOTHIN' CAN!

TIMIDLY, HARRY ENTERS THE BOOKSTORE, AND SURVEYS THE ENDLESS SHELVES LINED WITH ROW UPON ROW OF DUST-COVERED TOMES... WISTFUL WORDS WRAPPED IN A VEIL OF WONDER... TYPESET SECRETS JUST WAITING TO BE FOUND...
WELL, HERE GOES NOTHIN'!

FOR SEVERAL MINUTES, HARRY SCANS THE ENDLESS ARRAY OF TITLES, EYES SKIPPING FROM TEXT TO TEXT, UNTIL FINALLY, AMIDST THE SHELVES OF USED, OUT-OF-PRINT EDITIONS...
FUNNY HOW THIS ONE KIND'A CAUGHT MY EYE... FOR NO REASON!
HEY... WHAT IN...?

THAT'S MY NAME!
AUTOBIOGRAPHY
LIFE AND TIMES OF HARRY SWANN
NEVER VICTORIOUS, NEVER DEFEATED
SOMEBODY WITH THE SAME NAME AS ME... ONCE WROTE A BOOK!
WONDER IF THAT HARRY SWANN WAS A LOSER, LIKE ME!?

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OH, GOOD LORD, THIS CAN'T BE....!
IT'S NOT... NOT JUST MY NAME ... IT'S MY LIFE!!!
COMPLETE SET OF ENCYCLOPED

T-THAT'S MY WEDDING... THERE'S ME AND... AND ETHEL, AND...
HARRY SWANN'S WEDDING
ON JULY

AND, THERE'S ME WITH MISS PRITCHERT, MY THIRD-GRADE TEACHER...
IT'S MY WHOLE LIFE-- WRAPPED IN A BOOK!!

ABSTRACTLY, HARRY PAYS FOR HIS PRIZE AND WANDERS OUT INTO THE WARM EVENING AIR...
I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
EVERYTHING I'VE EVER SAID, THOUGHT, OR DONE IS PRESSED BETWEEN THE PAGES OF THIS BOOK... MY LIFE STORY ON PAPER!

THE BLOCKS PASS BY IN SILENCE UNTIL, AT LAST...
I'M HOME AGAIN!
I CAN'T TELL ETHEL ABOUT THE BOOK... SHE'D THINK I WAS NUTS!
IF ONLY I HAD GUTS ENOUGH TO TELL HER WHERE TO GET OFF...OR...
OR WHAT HARRY SWANN?
OR WHAT??

IN THE ENSUING DAYS, HARRY AND THE BOOK BECAME VIRTUALLY INSEPARABLE...
SON OF A GUN... HARRY! YOU'RE READIN'! I DIDN'T THINK YOU KNEW HOW!
LAY OFF, WILLYA, ETHEL?...
LESSEE, THE BOOK SAYS HERE I WON A FORTUNE AT THE RACE TRACK... BUT I NEVER...
WAITAMINNIT! THAT DATE... THIS ISN'T SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN UNTIL TOMORROW...
...AND IT EVEN LISTS THE WINNIN' NAGS!
TRUE TO THE PROPHECY, HARRY SPENDS THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS AT THE TRACK... DOLLARS ROLL LIKE CANDY... AND HARRY TURNS A FEW TWO-DOLLAR BETS INTO A FORTUNE...
DON'T SWEAT IT, MAMA'S BOY! YOU'LL WIN THIS RACE AND I'LL WIN ANOTHER TEN THOU!
BUT, NEWFOUND WEALTH BRINGS WITH IT NEWFOUND PROBLEMS... AND, AS THE WEEKS PROGRESS AND HARRY'S FORTUNE GROWS...
AIN'T IT BEAUTIFUL, HARRY?
AND, IT ONLY COST $50,000!
IT IS BUT A SIMPLE MATTER FOR HARRY TO ADJUST THE BRAKE-LINES ON HIS WIFE'S BRAND-NEW CAR... AND SO, SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER...
SLOW CURVE
SCREEEECH!
THE BRAKES WON'T HOLD!
I'M NOT GOING TO MAKE THIS CUR-- NNOOO!

IT'S A *LOVELY* FUNERAL... AT WHICH HARRY APPEARS EVERY BIT THE *GRIEVING HUSBAND*, BUT...

I CAN'T GET OVER IT! EVERY *DETAIL* OF ETHEL'S DEATH IS RECORDED IN THE PAGES OF THAT BOOK!

IT'S LIKE I'M JUST AN EXTENSION... JUST A *TOOL* OF THAT CRAZY BOOK!

THE FORMALITIES *OVER*, HARRY HEADS TOWARDS HOME...

WELL, THATS DONE WITH... I WONDER WHAT'S IN STORE FOR ME *NOW*?

I NEVER DARE TO READ *TOO* FAR AHEAD IN THIS BOOK!

DRIVE THROUGH THE *CITY*, ANDREW, IF YOU PLEASE!

YES SIR, MR. SWANN!

WITH *ETHEL* OUT OF THE WAY, I'LL HAVE A LOT MORE *CAPITAL* TO INVEST...!

OF COURSE... THE *CONSTRUCTION* BUSINESS! I SHOULD'VE THOUGHT OF IT BEFORE!

SWANN

I'D BETTER CHECK WITH THE *BOOK* BEFORE I MAKE ANY SORTA *BIG MOVE*!

WELL, WHADDAYA KNOW... I WAS *RIGHT*! IT SAYS HERE THAT I STOPPED AT A CONSTRUCTION SITE RIGHT AFTER ETHEL'S *DEATH*, AND...

AND, *WHAT*? HEY-- WHAT *IS* THIS?

THE NEXT PAGE IS... *BLANK*!

IN FACT, SO ARE ALL THE REST OF THE PAGES!

HALF THE BOOK IS *EMPTY*! IT DOESN'T SAY A *THING*!

I *GOTTA* FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENS *NEXT*!

ANDREW, *STOP THE CAR*! I'M GETTIN' OUT!

WAIT HERE, ANDREW, I'LL BE RIGHT *BACK*!

YES, MR. SWANN!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

A SAGACIOUS SMATTERING OF SOMEWHAT SENSELESS SMALL-TALK!

ITEM! Wanna know why we're always bragging that Marvel's riotous readers are a cut above average? Well, try this for a clincher. A short time ago, Sheldon Feldner, director of Univ. of California Vera Cruz' University Theatre (and an R.F.O. and K.O.F. to boot), probably having heard that STAN THE MAN is a dyed-in-the-wool Shakespeare buff, contacted the Bullpen to see if we'd help with UCVC's University Theatre Company's production of Julius Caesar. To make a long story short, Fearless Feldner recruited JACK (KING) KIRBY to do the costume designing for the show, while the rest of us contributed our moral support and not-inconsiderable kibitzing talents. Well, the show was a smash when presented on the Coast—with closed-circuit TV yet! And we're gonna frame all the great newspaper clippings that praised Jack's artistry and were good enough to mention merry Marvel in connection with so erudite an endeavor! — Next month, the Palladium!

ITEM! Speaking of JOLLY JACK, many long-time fans have been writing to say that THE FANTASTIC FOUR is getting better each issue — with the stories reading more like the memorable masterworks of the FF's early years. This kinda breaks us up, 'cause it's beginning to seem as though we have to take a few steps back in order to surge forward! (The philosophers among you — and what Marvelite isn't? — can mull that one over for a while).

ITEM! Stop worrying! Dry your little tears! Let thy faith be renewed! Despite what you saw in the last ish of SHIELD, we promise you that Nick Fury lives! But don't take our words for it — latch onto AVENGERS #72 (on sale early in Nov.) and see for yourself — in living color!

ITEM! In answer to the countless thousands who wanna know where we've hidden JAUNTY JIM STERANKO (well, we did get a postcard or two) — you may have trouble believing this, but it's on the level. Last time we saw him, Slim Jim turned down just about every strip we asked him to draw, saying there was only one he wanted to sink his teeth into. We tremblingly asked which it was, and he answered — (hold onto your hairdo, hero) — he's itching to draw a ROMANCE yarn! Try as we may, we couldn't talk him out of it. So, we gave him a hearts-and-flowers assignment for one of our love books, and he left on cloud nine. That was weeks ago and we haven't seen him since. All we can think of is that the sonofagun is out doing some personal research! Well, we'll keep you posted!

ITEMS! (Some fast one-liners while space permits.) PEERLESS PAUL REINMAN will be pencilling for us once again in our two new spooky mags! . . . Talk about versatility! JIM (MADMAN) MOONEY is not only a top penciller and inker, but a sculptor, painter, guitarist, and authority on antiques, as well! . . . We're still trying to decide whether MERRY MARIE SEVERIN is our funniest dramatic artist, or our most dramatic humorous cartoonist! (But either way, we love the gal!) . . . Say "Hi" to AMIABLE ALLYN BRODSKY, our youthful new editorial staffer. He's the only guy we know who talks as fast as RASCALLY ROY. Good thing SMILEY isn't a slow listener! . . . WILD BILL EVERETT is now writing scripts for us — and they're even zingier than the great SUB-MARINERS he cooked up about a zillion years ago! . . . Have you ever seen a strip that didn't look great when inked by the way-out wizardry of TERRIFIC TOMMY PALMER? (We haven't!)

STAN'S SOAPBOX

It's almost unbelievable! We thought it would shake you up when we announced our intention of dropping continued stories — but we never expected to be so completely swamped by an avalanche of irate letters, cards, and telegrams! Even those of you who once thought we were overdoing our continued yarns have threatened to bring the wrath of Marveldom Assembled upon our pointy heads if we dare to drop our never-ending sub-plots. And, so, it's "Here's where Stan tries to get off the hook" time again! We promise NOT to drop our swingin' sub-plots — we never intended to, anyway. All we want to do is see if we can end each story within a single issue. That doesn't mean we may not bring back the villain next ish — or let a running plot-thread continue. But, we want to make it less of a catastrophe if a Believer happens to miss a yarn. Also, we'd like to feel that a new reader can join us 'most anywhere without needing a road map. It's still too early to tell if we're gonna wind up with egg on our faces again, but we promise you this — if our earth-shattering new policy hasn't really grabbed you by the time you read these portentious words — don't worry! We'll switch back to our old, cataclysmically confusin', continued-story policy before you can say "No wonder they dumped ol' Stan!"

Excelsior!

Smiley

. . . The block-bustin' BUSCEMA brothers (BIG JOHN and OUR PAL SAL) better look to their laurels! JAZZY JOHNNY ROMITA is teaching JOHN JR. how to draw super-hero spectaculars, and we hear that the lad's a whiz already! So, as soon as we have a pair of RING-A-DINGS running wild around here, let's look out for the fireworks! . . . The votes have been counted! A united Marveldom wants STAN AND JACK to come up with an INHUMANS mag for 1970, or they'll sic Lockjaw on 'em!

THE MIGHTY MARVEL CHECKLIST

Marvel-ous Mags On Sale Right Now!

FANTASTIC FOUR #94: The return of the Frightful Four! With mystic witchcraft — and a brand new character!

SPIDER-MAN #80: Remember the Chameleon? Well, how can Spidey fight a man who could be anyone? You'll never guess the ending!

SILVER SURFER #11: The Surfer and Shalla Bal face-to-face at last — while the Sky-Rider combats an army! But then — disaster!

AVENGERS #71: The battle that time forgot! The Avengers take on Cap, the Torch, and Namor in wartime Paris! Don't miss "Endgame!"

THOR #171: The Wrecker is back — with a city at his mercy! But Thor has an operation to perform! Talk about suspense — !

CAPTAIN AMERICA #121: The Man-Brute is born — stronger, faster than Cap himself! But what is the terrible secret which haunts him?

X-MEN #63: Magneto returns — with a new horde of Evil Mutants at his side! Guest-starring the one and only Ka-Zar!

DAREDEVIL #59: Willie Lincoln is marked for death — by the murderous new villain they call the Torpedo! Action all the way!

HULK #123: The Leader is back — and out for vengeance! And if he can't find the Hulk, then Bruce Banner will do! A thriller!

IRON MAN #21: Tony Stark retires! A new Iron Man is born! But then — enter the new and deadlier Crimson Dynamo!

SUB-MARINER #21: It had to happen! Atlantis invades the surface world! But — which side is Namor on?

SGT. FURY #73: The fiercest, fightin'est battleground of all — as the Howlers go into action on the Russian Front! A comic-mag first!

TOWER OF SHADOWS #3: The groovIest, most gargoyle-laden goodies of all — told in Marvel's midnight manner!

MARVEL SUPER-HEROES #24: DD meets the Purple Man! Plus an early Lee-Kirby X-Men classic! A bargain-basement blast!

MARVEL TALES #24: Spidey — Thor — and the terrifically torrid Torch! What more can any superhero buff ask?

AND, OF COURSE —

MILLIE THE MODEL #178 — CHILI #9 — MAD ABOUT MILLIE #7 — MY LOVE #3 — KID COLT #141 — MIGHTY MARVEL WESTERN #7 — HOMER THE HAPPY GHOST #2 — and PETER THE LITTLE PEST #2!

AND, STILL ON SALE — !

CAPTAIN MARVEL #19: "The Mad Master of the Murder Maze!" A kookie title — for one of the most offbeat sagas of all!

CHAMBER OF DARKNESS #2: A face in a mirror! A book that foretells the future! A chiller by Edgar Allan Poe! It's a must!

MARVEL'S GREATEST COMICS #24: The F.F. — Iron Man — Dr. Strange — and an all-new Watcher epic! Bargains galore!

CAPT. SAVAGE #17: The spotlight — and the gunsights — are trained on Jay Little Bear! Like great!

OUR LOVE STORY #2: Even if you don't dig gals' mags, think of the fun you'll have trying to guess which strip was drawn by whom!

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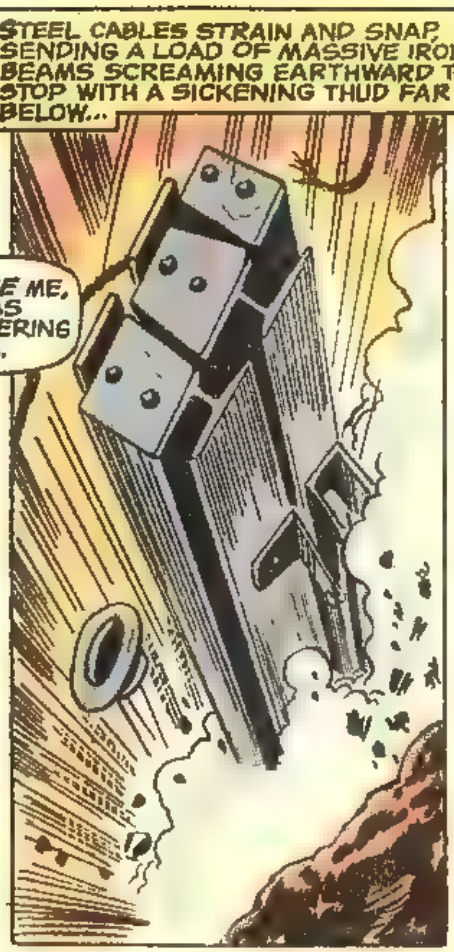
EXCUSE ME, I WAS WONDERING IF...
MISTER!! WATCH OUT!

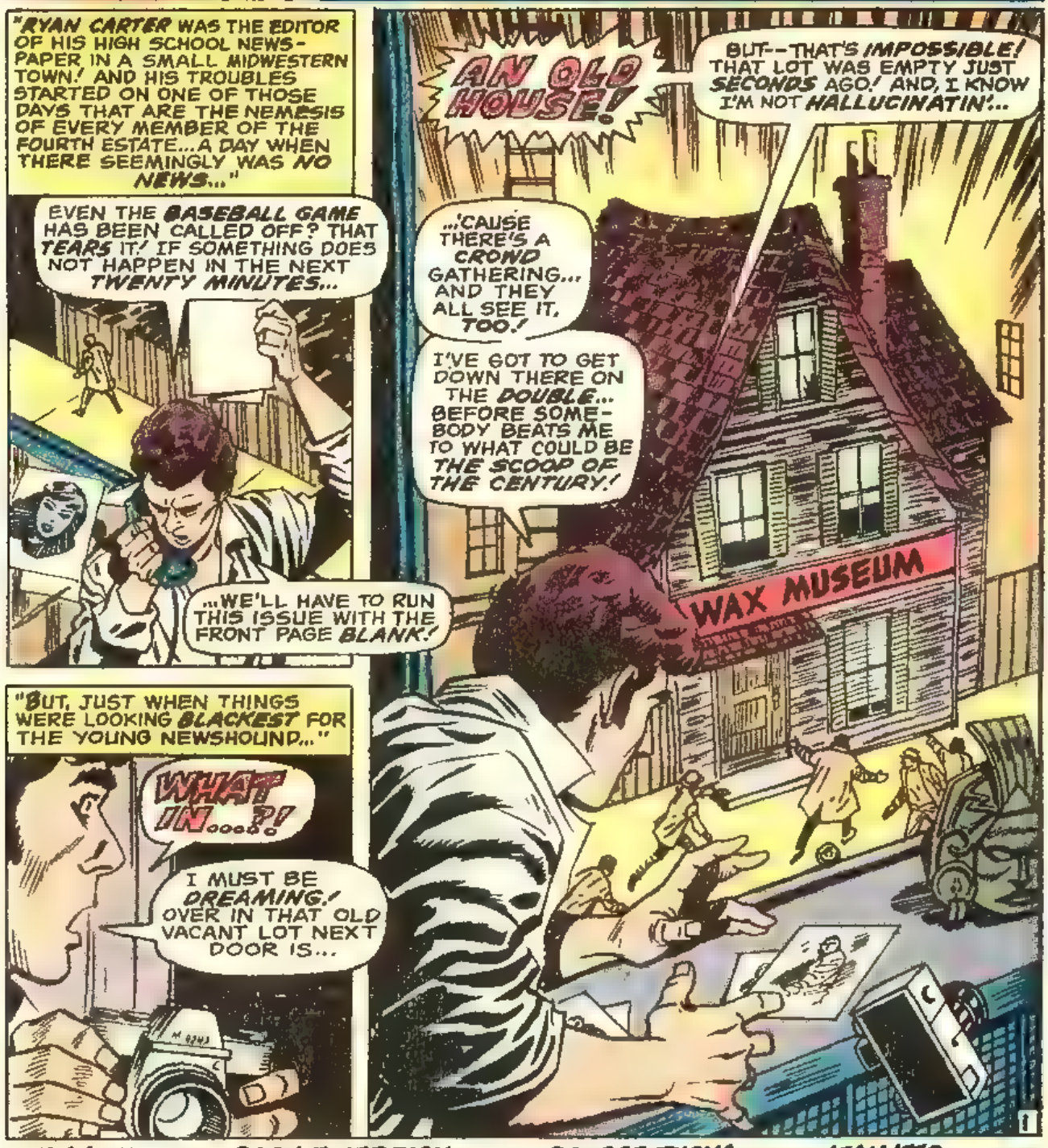

STEEL CABLES STRAIN AND SNAP, SENDING A LOAD OF MASSIVE IRON BEAMS SCREAMING EARTHWARD TO STOP WITH A SICKENING THUD FAR BELOW...

WE'RE TOO LATE... THIS GUY IS BEYOND HELP!
SOMEBODY SEND FOR THE COPS... AND A HEARSE!

WHAT THE HECK IS THIS... A BOOK?
THAT GUY MUST HAVE BEEN CARRYING IT WITH HIM WHEN HE DIED!

"LIFE AND TIMES OF CHARLIE JENKINS!"? WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE?
THAT'S MY NAME!!!
I'M CHARLIE JENKINS!
LIFE AND TIMES OF CHARLIE JENKINS

AS A CROWD GATHERS, CHARLIE JENKINS PICKS UP THE BOOK... AND WALKS SILENTLY INTO THE DEEPENING SHADOWS OF TWILIGHT...!
BAH-- HUMBUG!
THE WAY THAT BOOK CHANGES HANDS, YOU'D THINK IT WAS NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK!
OH, WELL, AT LEAST CHARLIE IS ENJOYING THE BOOK... HE HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO PUT IT DOWN... HEH, HEH, HEH... YET!!
FIN



STAN LEE, EDITOR • GARY FRIEDRICH, WRITER • GEORGE TUSKA, ARTIST • JEAN IZZO, LETTERER

PHEW! DIDN'T GET HERE A SECOND TOO SOON!

WITH THE SIZE OF THIS CROWD THAT'S GATHERING, THE PLACE'LL BE CRAWLING WITH BIG TIME REPORTERS IN NO TIME!

I GOT TO HURRY AND GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS...

...SO I CAN SCOOP THEM ALL!

I TELL YOU IT JUST APPEARED IN A FLASH!

ONE INSTANT THERE WAS NOTHING... AND THE NEXT... THERE IT WAS!

LOOK! THE DOOR'S OPENING!

"THEN, SUDDENLY..."

STAND BACK, FOOLS! LET ME WARN YOU NOT TO MEDDLE IN THAT WHICH YOU CANNOT BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND!

JUST STAY AWAY FROM THIS HOUSE... AND LEAVE ITS OCCUPANTS IN PEACE!

I'M CALLING THE POLICE!

WHO ARE YOU? HOW THE DEVIL DID YOU GET HERE? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

THAT... IS NONE OF YOUR CONCERN!

I CAN ONLY TELL YOU THAT IF YOU GO ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS AND LEAVE US TO OURS...

NO HARM WILL COME TO ANY OF YOU! BUT, IF YOU DARE DISTURB US...

...THE CONSEQUENCES WILL BE MORE HORRIBLE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE!

"THEN, AS THE LOCAL CITIZENRY LOOKED ON IN STUNNED SILENCE, THE GHOULISH CARETAKER DISAPPEARED INSIDE THE EERIE MANSION'S WALLS..."

"AND, AS THE DOORS WERE BOLTED AND THE SHADES DRAWN SHUT, ONLY ONE DARED VENTURE CLOSE ENOUGH TO PEER INSIDE..."

THIS IS MY BIG CHANCE! EVERYONE ELSE IS TOO SCARED TO INVESTIGATE!

...BUT NOTHING SHORT OF DEATH IS GONNA STOP THIS REPORTER FROM GETTING HIS SCOOP!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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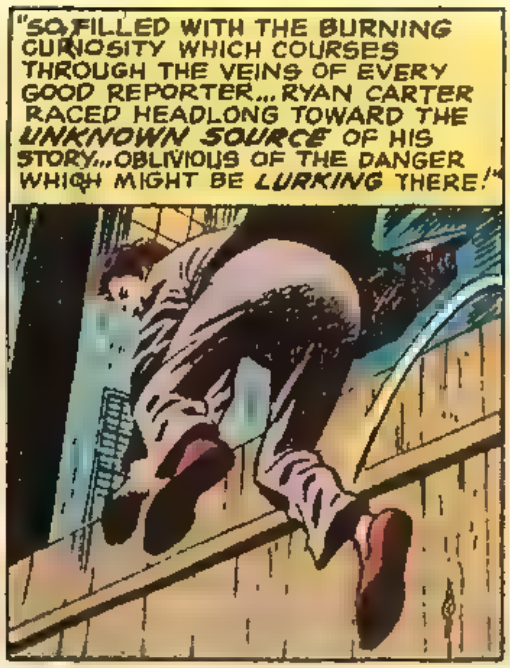
BUT I'M NOT GONNA FIND OUT ANYTHING FROM HERE! I'VE GOT TO GET INSIDE SOMEHOW!

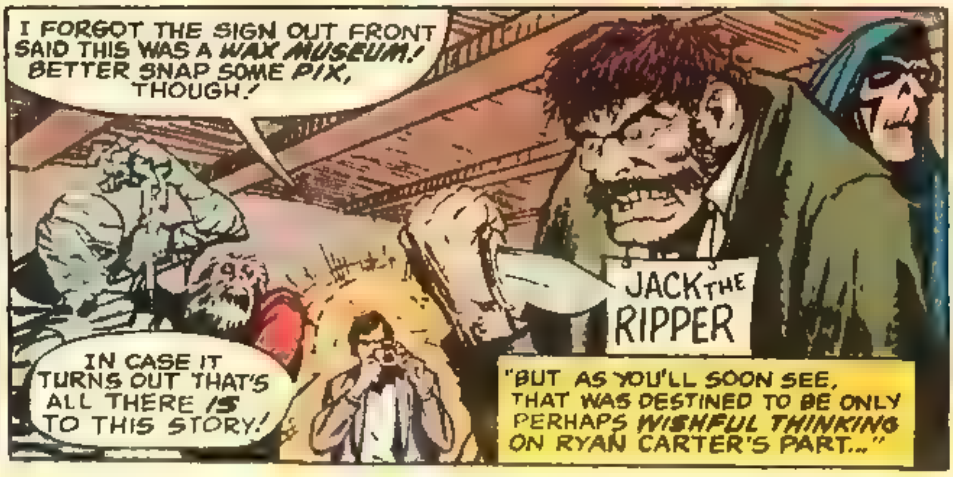

"SO, FILLED WITH THE BURNING CURIOSITY WHICH COURSES THROUGH THE VEINS OF EVERY GOOD REPORTER... RYAN CARTER RACED HEADLONG TOWARD THE UNKNOWN SOURCE OF HIS STORY... OBLIVIOUS OF THE DANGER WHICH MIGHT BE LURKING THERE!"

JUST LIKE I FIGURED... THEY FORGOT TO LOCK THE BASEMENT WINDOWS!
NOW THAT I'M INSIDE... IT'S JUST A MATTER OF FINDING OUT WHAT'S GOING ON IN HERE...
...AND GETTING OUT TO TELL THE WORLD ABOUT IT!

AH, BUT LITTLE DID OUR YOUNG HEADLINE HUNTER REALIZE HOW DIFFICULT THE LATTER PORTION OF HIS ASSIGNMENT WOULD BE...!
THIS IS A CREEPY OLD JOINT... BUT WHAT HARM CAN A HOUSE DO ME?

"AND, HIS ANSWER WAITED AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS..."
YYIIIIEEEE!

PHEW!
NOTHING BUT A BUNCH OF WAX DUMMIES!


I FORGOT THE SIGN OUT FRONT SAID THIS WAS A WAX MUSEUM! BETTER SNAP SOME PIX, THOUGH!
JACK THE RIPPER
IN CASE IT TURNS OUT THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO THIS STORY!
"BUT AS YOU'LL SOON SEE, THAT WAS DESTINED TO BE ONLY PERHAPS WISHFUL THINKING ON RYAN CARTER'S PART..."

"THEN, AS YOUNG CARTER TURNED AWAY, THE WAX REPLICAS OF HISTORY'S MOST MACABRE MENACES BEGAN TO MOVE... AND TO DISCARD THEIR COSTUMES...
"...UNTIL, WITHIN MERE SECONDS, THEY WERE STATUES NO MORE ...BUT, RATHER, LIVING, BREATHING CREATURES...THE LIKES OF WHICH NO EARTHMAN HAD EVER SEEN BEFORE..."
I WILL COMMUNICATE WITH YOU THROUGH THOUGHT-WAVES, MY FRIENDS...UNTIL WE DETERMINE IF THE EARTHLING IS HOSTILE!
WE WILL MOVE IN ON HIM... AND ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE HIM! THEN, PERHAPS HE CAN TELL US ALL WE NEED TO KNOW!
"HOWEVER, BEFORE THE ALIENS COULD REACH THEIR UNSUSPECTING QUARRY..."
WHA...?!
"HE SPOTTED THEM... AND, LIKE ANY EARTHMAN UPON HIS FIRST CONTACT WITH BEINGS FROM ANOTHER PLANET... HE BOLTED AND RAN..."
THEY'RE NOT DUMMIES AT ALL! THEY'RE-- ALIVE! GOTTA GO FOR HELP... GET TO THE POLICE!
"AND SO, COMPLETELY FORGETTING HIS INITIAL OBJECTIVE, RYAN CARTER FLED TO SEEK ASSISTANCE... NEVER REALIZING HE NOW HAD A COMPETITOR IN HIS RACE FOR A SCOOP... A COMPETITOR NAMED. FEAR!"
WAIT! WE MUST NOT PURSUE HIM!
AS WE SUSPECTED, EARTHMEN ARE STILL FAR TOO PRIMITIVE FOR CONTACT WITH OUR RACE!
THEY STILL FEAR ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING WHICH THEY CANNOT UNDERSTAND!
"BUT, THE PHILOSOPHY OF A FAR-SUPERIOR ALIEN RACE WAS THE LAST THING ON THE TERRIFIED TEENAGER'S MIND AS HE REACHED THE FRONT STEPS OF THE LOCAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS...
HELP SOMEBODY... HELP! YOU GOTTA COME QUICK! WE'RE BEIN' INVADED BY MARTIANS!
THEY'RE IN AN OLD HOUSE...ACROSS FROM THE SCHOOL! COME ON! THERE ISN'T A SECOND TO WASTE!
4

"WHILE, BACK *INSIDE* THE MYSTERIOUS MANSION..."

WE WERE WRONG TO COME HERE IN THE *FIRST PLACE!*

PERHAPS THERE IS STILL TIME TO *RECTIFY* THAT MISTAKE, THOUGH!

AFTER ALL, SO FAR WE HAVE ONLY BEEN SEEN BY *ONE* EARTHMAN!

SO, WE MUST PREPARE TO *ABANDON* EARTH *IMMEDIATELY! PREPARE FOR DEPARTURE!!*

"THEN, AS THE SPACEMEN MADE READY FOR THEIR *ESCAPE...*"

I'M TELLING YOU THERE ARE *MARTIANS* IN THAT HOUSE, OFFICER! I *SWEAR* IT!

LOOK! I'M A *NEWSPAPER MAN...* SO YOU KNOW I WOULDN'T *LIE* TO YOU!

25 SAT

OF *COURSE* NOT... UNLESS MAYBE THERE WAS A *STORY* IN IT FOR YOU!

BUT, SINCE WE *DON'T* HAVE ANYTHING *BETTER* TO DO... WE'RE GONNA *CHECK IT OUT* FOR YOU!

AFTER WHICH I'M GONNA HAVE YOU *PUT AWAY... FOR KEEPS!*

I'M GONNA CALL *ANOTHER* SQUAD CAR TO *MEET* US THERE! THEN I'M GOING TO *PERSONALLY* TAKE YOU TO THE SITE...

...AND, SONNY, YOU'D BETTER PRAY THERE ARE MARTIANS RUNNING AROUND *ALL OVER* THE PLACE!

BECAUSE IF THERE *AREN'T...*

I'LL LOSE THE BIGGEST SCOOP IN *HISTORY...* AMONG OTHER THINGS!

NOW *LET'S* GO!

"SO, AT LAST THE FEAR HAD BEGAN TO *SUBSIDE...* AND THE *REPORTER* IN RYAN CARTER WAS PUMPING PRINTER'S INK THROUGH HIS VEINS ONCE MORE! AND, AS THE POLICE CAR RACED TOWARD THE SCENE OF THE SCOOP, ONLY *ONE THOUGHT* WAS ON HIS MIND...!"

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, AS LONG AS SOMEONE ELSE *SEES* THE MARTIANS... I'LL HAVE THE BIGGEST STORY EVER PRINTED! I'LL BE A CINCH FOR A *PULITZER PRIZE!*

"AND, WHEN CARTER AND THE POLICE *ARRIVED* AT THE SCENE... IT LOOKED AS THOUGH HIS DAYDREAMS WOULD BE *REALIZED*..."

SEE, OFFICER! I TOLD YOU I WASN'T LYING! YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THAT OLD HOUSE WAS NEVER HERE *BEFORE!*

WELL... I HAVE TO ADMIT YOU GOT A *POINT* THERE... BUT IT STILL DOESN'T PROVE WE'RE BEIN' INVADED BY *MARTIANS!*

LET'S GO INSIDE AND HAVE A *LOOK AROUND!*

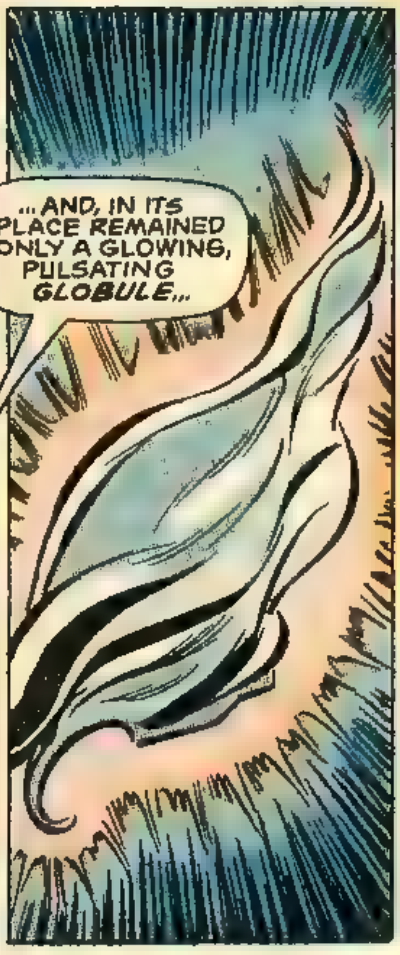
"BUT, BEFORE THE BAFFLED POLICEMAN COULD TAKE A *SINGLE STEP*..."

HEY... THAT NOISE! WHAT IS IT? HUMMING... LIKE A MILLION BEEHIVES!

EVERYBODY *STAND BACK!* THERE'S SOMETHIN' *MIGHTY STRANGE* GOING ON HERE, AND...

IT SOUNDS LIKE... THERE'S SOME KIND OF *ENGINE* IN THE HOUSE... REVVING UP *HIGHER AND HIGHER!*

"THEN, AS THE ASTONISHED ONLOOKERS BEGAN TO FLEE IN *PANIC*... THE SHAPE OF THE HOUSE BEGAN TO *CHANGE*... NOT UNLIKE AN ENORMOUS PIECE OF CLAY IN THE HANDS OF A MISCHIEVOUS CHILD..."



"AND, WHILE A HUNDRED EYES LOOKED ON IN *DISBELIEF*... THE SHIP SUDDENLY LURCHED SKYWARD WITH A VIOLENT, DEAFENING *ROAR*..."

"...LEAVING IN ITS WAKE ONLY A CLOUD OF SMOKE...AND AN EMPTY, *VACANT LOT*..."

WHAT *HAPPENED*? WHAT *WAS* IT? I MEAN... WE DIDN'T JUST *IMAGINE* IT! IT REALLY DID *HAPPEN*!

YEAH... I RECKON IT *DID*! BUT, WHO ON EARTH WOULD EVER *BELIEVE* IT?

"ON *EARTH*? PERHAPS *NO ONE* BUT THERE ARE THOSE OF *ANOTHER PLANET* WHO KNOW IT REALLY HAPPENED..."

WELL, WE'RE NOT THE *FIRST* TENTH-LEVEL STUDENTS WHO'VE JOURNEYED TO EARTH IN SEARCH OF A NEWS STORY FOR THE *INTER-GALACTIC PRESS*...

...AND WE'RE NOT LIKELY TO BE THE *LAST*! I WAS SO HOPING THAT WE'D FIND SOMETHING *NEW AND STARTLING* TO REPORT ABOUT THE EARTHLINGS!

BUT, THEY NEVER SEEM TO *CHANGE* MUCH... SO, WE'LL JUST HAVE TO BE SATISFIED WITH A *DULL FRONT PAGE* FOR THIS ISSUE!

NAVIGATOR... SET COURSE FOR *SIRIUS IV*! IT IS TIME WE GOT BACK TO THE *CAMPUS*... AND PUT THIS WEEK'S ISSUE TO *BED*!

AND SO, WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE BIGGEST NEWS STORY IN THE HISTORY OF *EARTH*... WAS NEVER PRINTED...

...BECAUSE, AFTER ALL, WHO WOULD BELIEVE WHAT A HANDFUL OF SMALL TOWN CITIZENS CLAIMED THEY HAD *SEEN*...

AT *MIDNIGHT*... IN THE *WAX MUSEUM*?

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HERE'S A LITTLE *STORY* OF *H.R.L'S*, ONE HE CALLED...

BUT, *H.P. LOVECRAFT*... NOW'D *THERE'D* BE A WRITER AFTER MY OWN HEART... IF OL' DIGGER *HAD* ONE!

HE DWELLS ALL *ALONE* IN A VERY ANCIENT HOUSE BY THE *SEA*, DOES THE TERRIBLE OLD MAN... AND THE STORY GOES THAT HE IS BOTH EXCEEDINGLY *RICH* AND EXCEEDINGLY *FEEBLE*...!

WE GO *IN* NOW, ANGELO... *NO?*

NOT FOR A FEW MORE *MINUTES*, MANUEL... BUT TAKE IT *EASY!*

THE OLD MAN ISN'T LIKELY TO BE *GOING* ANYWHERE AT *MIDNIGHT!*

...AND, HIS BEING BOTH RICH *AND* FEEBLE FORMS A SITUATION VERY *ATTRACTIVE* TO MEN OF THE PROFESSION OF ANGELO RICCI AND JOE CZANEK AND MANUEL SILVA...

...FOR, THAT PROFESSION IS NOTHING LESS DIGNIFIED THAN... *ROBBERY!*

STAN LEE
EDITOR
ROY THOMAS
SCRIPTER
BARRY SMITH
ARTIST
JOHN VERPOORTEN
AND
DAN ADKINS
INKERS
JEAN IZZO
LETTERER

I WISH THOSE GUYS WOULD *HURRY UP* IN THERE!

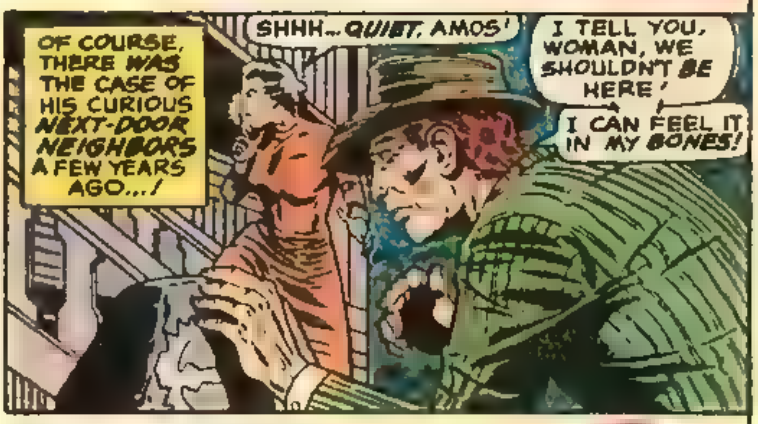
OL' JOE, HE DON'T *LIKE* THIS WHOLE SET-UP!

NOT AFTER THEM *TALES* WE HEARD ABOUT THE OLD MAN...!

BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH *ARKHAM HOUSE* (PUBLISHERS), SAUK CITY, WISCONSIN!

YES, THE INHABITANTS OF KINGSPORT SAY AND THINK *MANY* THINGS ABOUT THE DWELLER IN THIS MUSTY, MYSTERIOUS ABODE...THAT HE WAS CAPTAIN OF A *CLIPPER SHIP* IN HIS DAY. .THAT HE IS SO OLD THAT NO ONE CAN REMEMBER HIS *YOUTH*...

...OR EVEN HIS *NAME*...!



LET'S SEE NOW *WHAT* WAS IT THOSE TWO NOSY NEIGHBORS SAID THEY SAW THRU THE DREARY, DUSTY PANES? OH YES... THE OLD MAN WAS PLAYING WITH SOME PECULIAR *BOTTLES*, WITH *SOME* LITTLE *LEAD WEIGHTS* IN THEM...

...AND DIDN'T THEY ALSO SAY HE WAS *TALKING* TO THOSE BOTTLES...?

AY, WE KEEP OUR SECRETS *LONG* AND *WELL*, DON'T WE, SPANISH JACK?

BUT THEN, THEY'RE *OUR* GOLD DOUBLOONS NOW... *OUR* PIECES-OF-EIGHT... *AIN'T* THEY, MATEY?

'COURSE, THERE'S THEM WHAT SAY WE OUGHT TO HAVE TURNED EM IN TO THEM *MERCHANTS* DOWN *BOSTON* WAY!

WHAT SAY *YOU*, LONG TOM?

AND *SCAR-FACE*... AND BOS'N *ELLIS*...?

AY YOU'RE *RIGHT*, TOM, ME BOY!

THEY'RE MOST LIKELY DEAD AND *GONE* BY NOW!

GOLD WON'T DO 'EM NO GOOD WHERE *THEY* BE, EH, LAD?

AMOS, DID YOU *SEE* THAT?

THAT BOTTLE *GLOWED*.. LIKE IT WAS *ANSWERIN'* HIM, AMOS!

AMOS?

ONE THING THE GOOD PEOPLE OF KINGSPORT AGREE ON...THAT NO ONE EVER WENT BACK TO SPY ON THE OLD MAN A *SECOND* TIME...!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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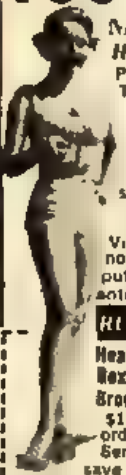

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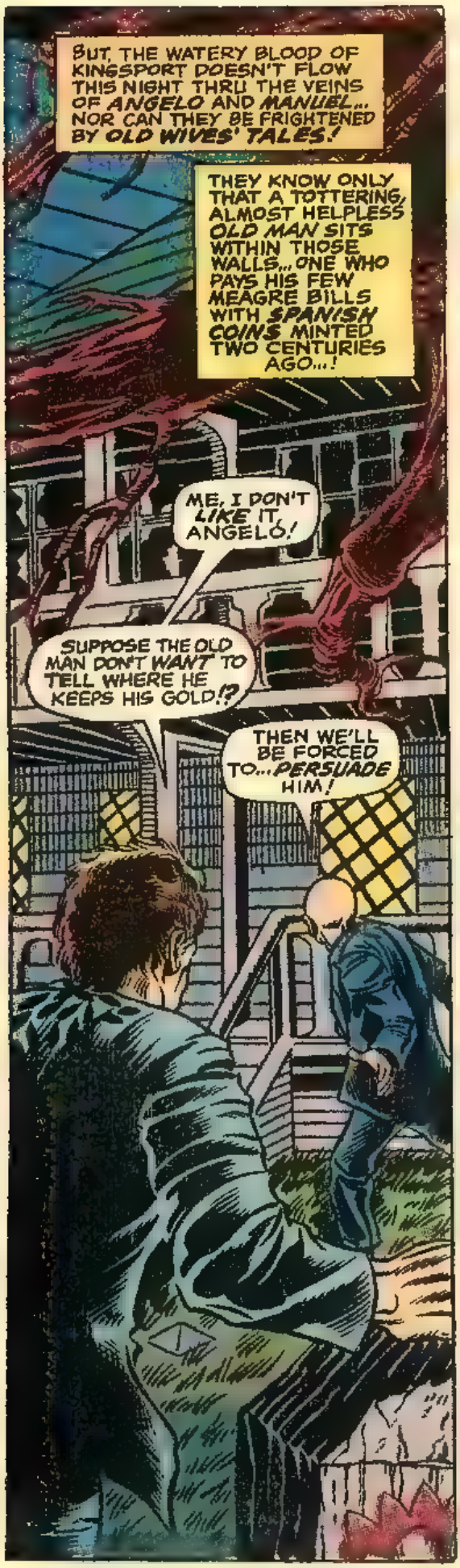
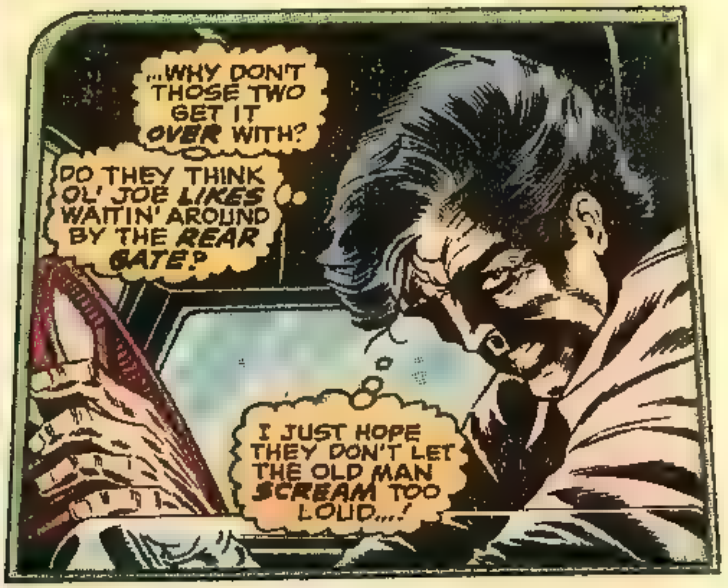
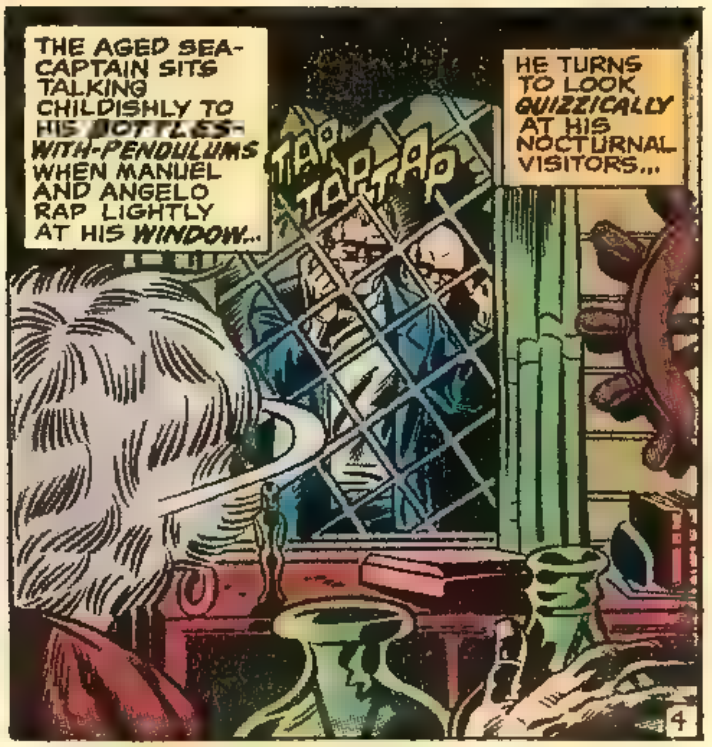
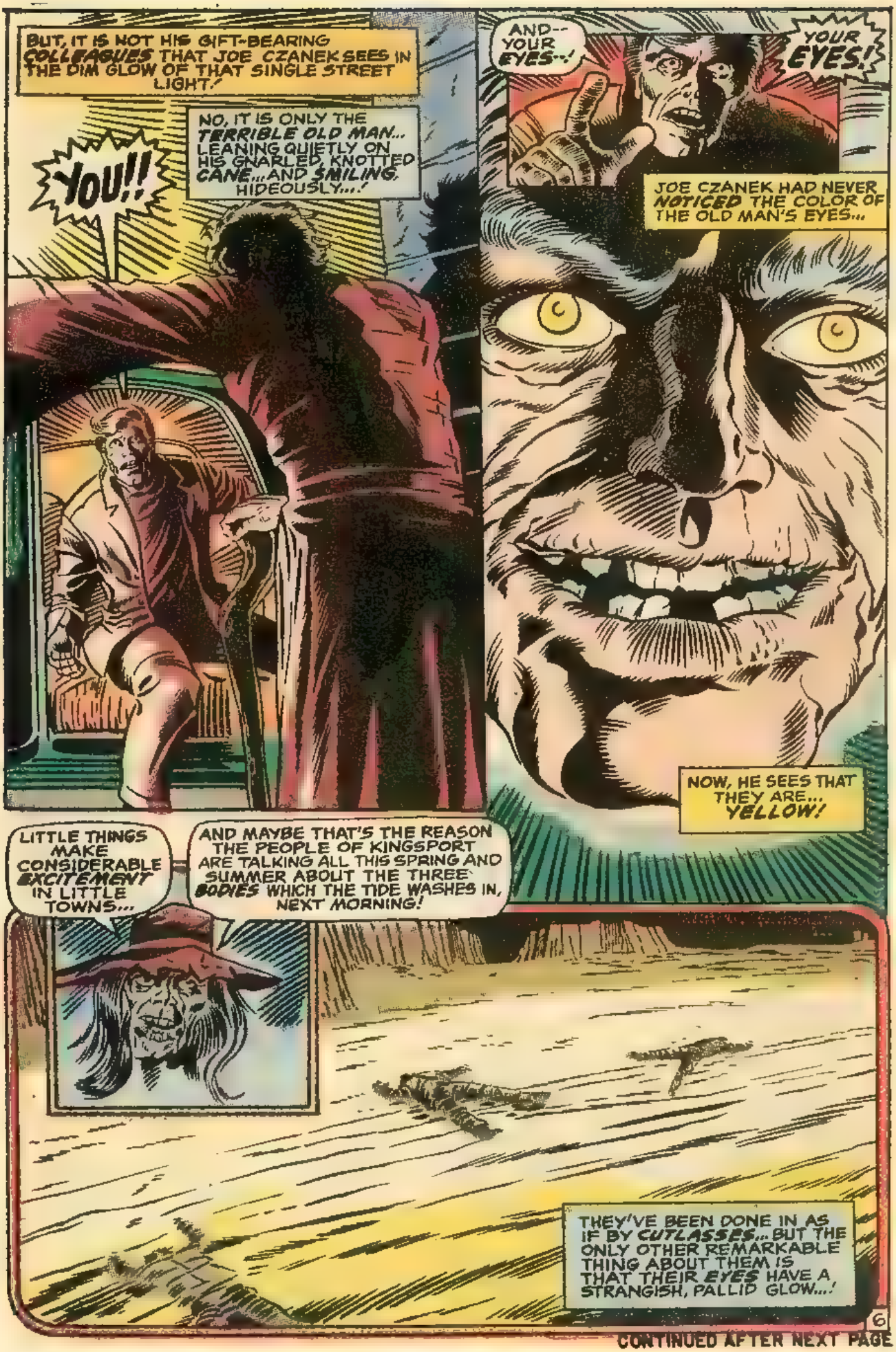

BUT, THE WATERY BLOOD OF KINGSPORT DOESN'T FLOW THIS NIGHT THRU THE VEINS OF ANGELO AND MANUEL... NOR CAN THEY BE FRIGHTENED BY OLD WIVES' TALES!
THEY KNOW ONLY THAT A TOTTERING, ALMOST HELPLESS OLD MAN SITS WITHIN THOSE WALLS... ONE WHO PAYS HIS FEW MEAGRE BILLS WITH SPANISH COINS MINTED TWO CENTURIES AGO...!
ME, I DON'T LIKE IT, ANGELO!
SUPPOSE THE OLD MAN DON'T WANT TO TELL WHERE HE KEEPS HIS GOLD!?
THEN WE'LL BE FORCED TO... PERSUADE HIM!

BUT, I KNOW THESE OLD SEA-DOGS... SOME OF THEM, THEY'RE TOUGH!
YOU JUST LET ANGELO WORRY ABOUT THAT!
NOW, PUT ON YOUR MASK, MY FRIEND!


...WHY DON'T THOSE TWO GET IT OVER WITH?
DO THEY THINK OL' JOE LIKES WAITIN' AROUND BY THE REAR GATE?
I JUST HOPE THEY DON'T LET THE OLD MAN SCREAM TOO LOUD...!


THE AGED SEA-CAPTAIN SITS TALKING CHILDISHLY TO HIS BOTTLES-WITH-PENDULUMS WHEN MANUEL AND ANGELO RAP LIGHTLY AT HIS WINDOW...
HE TURNS TO LOOK QUIZZICALLY AT HIS NOCTURNAL VISITORS...
TAP TAP TAP

...THEN POLITELY OPENS THE WEATHER-STAINED OAKEN DOOR...!
SCREAMS... COMIN' FROM THE HOUSE!
I TOLD THOSE JOKERS TO PLAY IT GENTLE WITH THE OLD GUY!
WE DON'T NEED A MURDER RAP HANGIN' OVER OUR HEADS!
OH WELL... NO SENSE WORRYIN' ABOUT THAT NOW!
THEY'LL BE HERE IN A MINUTE, STRAINED BACKS AND ALL...
STRAINED FROM ALL THE GOLD THEY'LL BE CARRYIN', NO DOUBT!
...TWENTY MINUTES?
WHAT'S KEEPIN' THOSE CLOWNS?
MAYBE THE OL' MAN DIED 'FORE HE COULD TALK!
MAYBE THEY GOTTA SEARCH THE PLACE TO FIND...
WHAT'S THAT?
SOMEBODY'S OPENIN' THE GATE-- REAL SLOW-LIKE!
KKKRRRRIIIKKKKK
MANUEL?
ANGELO?
C'MON, STOP PLAYIN' GAMES! WHAT YOU GOT FOR OLD JOE?
5



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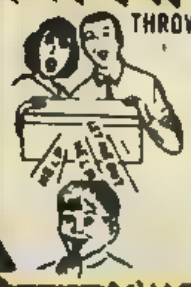

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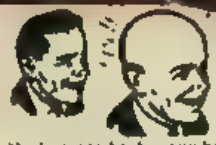

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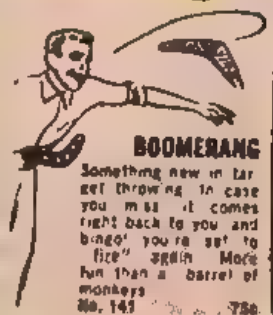

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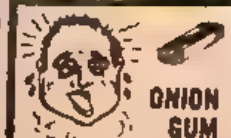

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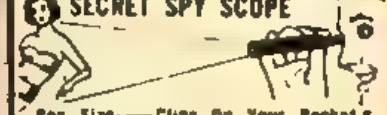

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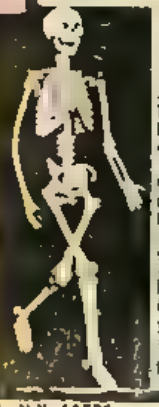

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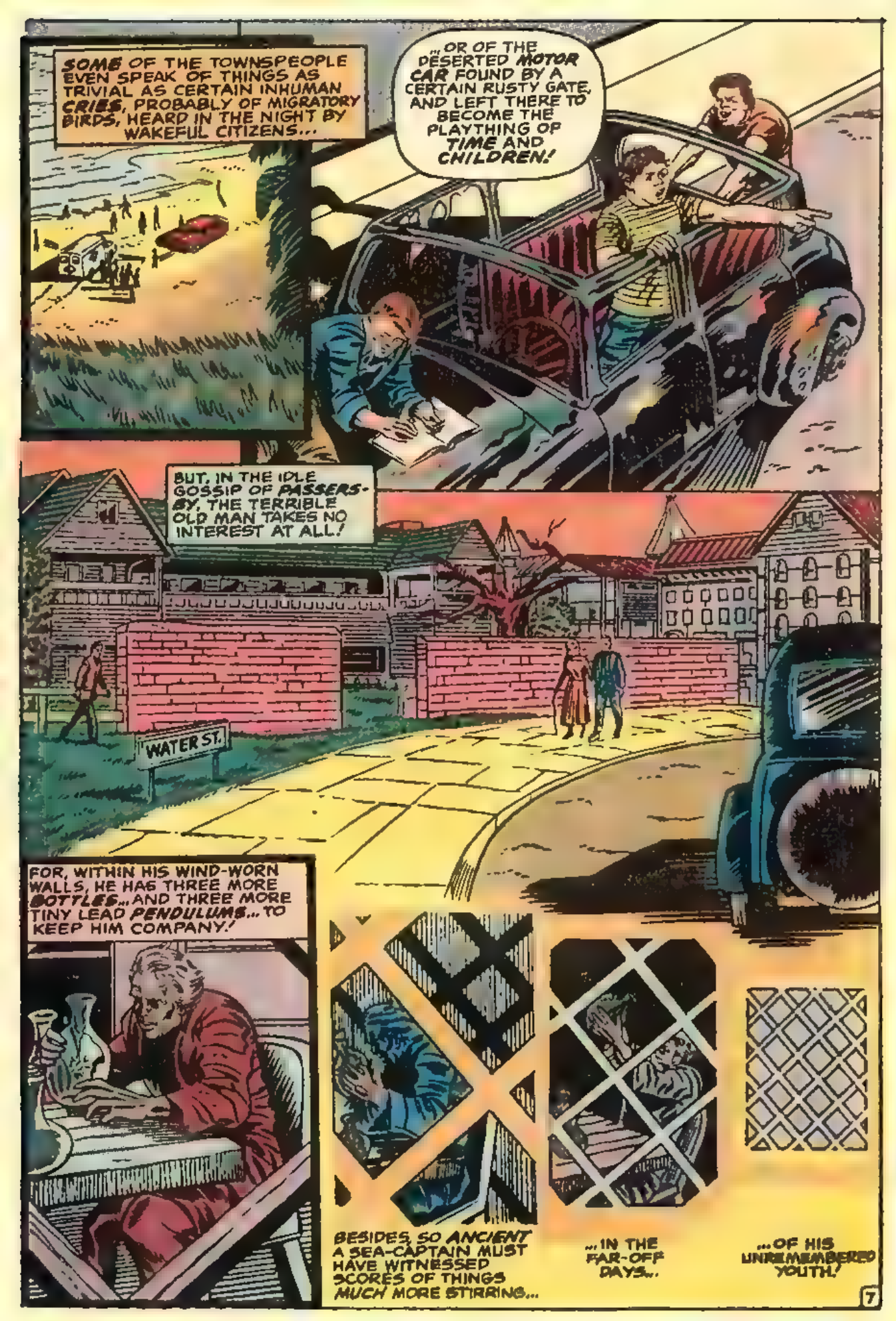
SOME OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE EVEN SPEAK OF THINGS AS TRIVIAL AS CERTAIN INHUMAN CRIES, PROBABLY OF MIGRATORY BIRDS, HEARD IN THE NIGHT BY WAKEFUL CITIZENS...
...OR OF THE DESERTED MOTOR CAR FOUND BY A CERTAIN RUSTY GATE, AND LEFT THERE TO BECOME THE PLAYTHING OF TIME AND CHILDREN!
BUT, IN THE IDLE GOSSIP OF PASSERS-BY, THE TERRIBLE OLD MAN TAKES NO INTEREST AT ALL!
WATER ST.
FOR, WITHIN HIS WIND-WORN WALLS, HE HAS THREE MORE BOTTLES... AND THREE MORE TINY LEAD PENDULUMS... TO KEEP HIM COMPANY!
BESIDES, SO ANCIENT A SEA-CAPTAIN MUST HAVE WITNESSED SCORES OF THINGS MUCH MORE STIRRING...
...IN THE FAR-OFF DAYS...
...OF HIS UNREMEMBERED YOUTH!
7

Tomes from the Tower!

Send letters to
THE MARVEL COMICS GROUP
SECOND FLOOR 625 MADISON AV.
NEW YORK 10022 N. Y.

Dear Stan,

I've just finished enjoying TOWER OF SHADOWS #1, especially Jim Steranko's "At the Stroke of Midnight". However, (why must there always be a however?) I do think there could be an improvement in the character named Digger . . .

Digger has been copied from the mystery tales narrators of your competitors' mags. I see nothing wrong in this. Obviously the format works, or you wouldn't be using it. I can even find it in my heart to forgive you for using those corny gags in Ol' Dig's intros.

From there, with Digger's careful narration and the cryptic dialogue of the protagonists, the stories build . . . and build . . . and build . . . and reach — a senses shattering climax . . .

And then that graveyard gobster sticks his head in with some inane remark and destroys the entire cleverly-built mood of the tale!!!

Whatever you do with Digger (let him do his thing on the letters page), please don't let him continue to kill the endings of otherwise fantastic fantasy yarns!

Ron Jamieson, 305-6000 Bathurst St.
Willowdale, Ontario

Strange you should feel that way, Ron, since the most successful comic stories ever published of the macabre type have had such narrators — whom a fierce passel of readers obviously didn't think interfered in any way with their enjoyment of the story. Still, you may have a point there . . . and we're considering it very carefully.

Just one correction, though, for the record: While we would hardly claim to have originated the idea of a spooky narrator (since our books of a decade or so ago didn't even use 'em), we can't stand idly by and let your statement that we've copied Digger and Headstone from our current competitors. Rather, *all* such mags out on the newsstand today, in whatever form, have taken the idea from the long-dead EC Comics group of the 1950's.

Still, the more we think about it, the righter you seem when you say that, for some readers at least, the cleverly-concocted impact of a tale can be minimized by the levity of such a character. Keep watching, Ron, and we'll see what we can do about that in issues to come . . . !

Dear Stan,

Reading in the Bulletin page that TOWER OF SHADOWS would be 'off-beat', 'beautiful', and would contain art by Steranko, I knew I just had to buy it. I'm sorry to say I was very disappointed. It was only mediocre. It almost looks like you said to the Bullpen, "Look! Super-heroes aren't selling like they used to, and Charleton and National have both been successful with weird story mags. Maybe we better try some ourselves." So you went ahead to produce a typical formula mag, with a typical formula ghoul of a host and typical formula stories reminiscent of the Marvel of the pre-F.F. era. Do you have to be reminded that you became the only comic book company to compete successfully with National by having the guts and common sense to depart from the usual Super-hero formula and to experiment with adult dialogue, no secret identities, continued stories, personal problems, one story per issue, etc.?

The art in TOWER was quite unexceptional. The coloring of the two final stories was flat and unimaginative. Steranko's art especially was a disappointment. In SHIELD and CAPTAIN AMERICA, he proved himself a master of layout. He used spectacular and unusual effects. "Beautiful" was the word for his art and the "Steranko influence" can be seen in the work of practically every artist nowadays. So, what the heck happened?

Jim's lay-outs only made the story seem jerky and confusing. There seemed to be no attempt at pacing. He used special effects and lay-outs which reacted against the mood of the story. The characterization was carried almost completely by dialogue balloons. Jim divided what could have been large panels into many smaller ones. This type of layout is good in depicting consecutive action, but Jim used it for no apparent reason, turning it into a mere tiresome cliche.

If you want to get into the weird tale field again, why not try something different? Since EC illustrated some of Ray Bradbury's stories, no comic company has ever illustrated stories of non-comic authors except for the stories of Edgar Rice Burroughs and stories based on movies based on books. There may be many good stories in public domain, perhaps Edgar Allen Poe and Lovecraft. Or, if you want to get into real fantasy, how about adapting some works of William Morris or Lord Dunsany? I hope you give this some serious thought.

Jim Allan, 10 Kingsgrove Blvd.
Toronto 590, Ontario

We did more than that, Jim. Rascally Roy, a recently-converted devotee of H.P. Lovecraft himself, took it upon himself to write and get permission to adapt some of the stories of this century's greatest master of the macabre story — while you'll be seeing more of Poe's classic tales (in one form or another) in future issues of both mags.

Got to admit, though, that we think you overlooked Jim Steranko's reason for the multiple panels of "At the Stroke of Midnight!" Unless we interpret our artist wrongly, he — one of the big movie buffs in the Bullpen — was attempting to capture some of the mood of the current cinema, which contains myriad fast-cuts and closeups, a technique used by many of the most creative of modern movie directors — and which, on television, was used by such successful shows as *Dragnet*. We'll defend to the death your right to say that you didn't *like* what artist Steranko was trying to do; we just wanted you to realize that it wasn't done "for no apparent reason".

Will the Jaunty One try more of the same in the future — or will he strike out boldly in another direction, looking for new cinematic worlds to conquer? Your guess is as good as ours, Mr. A.; we gave him a couple of weird synopses a couple of months ago, and haven't seen a page from him yet. But he tells us he's working on 'em . . . !

Dear Stan,

Let me be among the first to congratulate you and your staff on TOWER OF SHADOWS which, along with CHAMBER OF DARKNESS, will more fully complement the Marvel universe. Back in the days when SUSPENSE, ASTONISH, and JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY featured sci-fi and monster tales, only a few horror stories such as those in TOWER appeared. The stories were compact and skillfully told in six or seven pages, rather than long, drawn-out epics. This brevity now is both diversified and stimulating.

As for the mag itself, it's hard to criticize near perfection. The plots are ingenious, the outcomes brilliant, and, as usual, the characterizations typically Marvel . . . solidly realistic, believable, and intensely interesting. And in no more than seven pages per story! Also, there weren't any on-page-two-he-has-two-left-feet-but-on-page-three-he-has-two-right-feet type errors, which I'm really sad to see go.

Again my humble congratulations on a tremendous mag with far-reaching potential. Keep those stories coming, and much continued success be ever thine!

Kevin Morse, 340 Norwood Ci
Ballwin, Mo. 63011

We'll drink to that, Kevin — a swig of Light'n'Lively, anyway! And we're really sorry that you missed those two-right-feet types of errors. Tell you what: we'll try real hard to see if we can't make a couple of major goofs one of these first issues. Okay?

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Studio A-6260
Westport, Conn. 06880

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